

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0193

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH BC
SUBJ: RHODESIA: APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA

REF: (A) STATE 19753, (B) STATE 17228

1. CHARGE' CALLED ON MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MOGWE JAN 26 TO DISCUSS TALKING POINTS CONTAINED IN REF B. TO CONSIDER-
ABLE EXTENT THIS EXERCISE INVOLVED PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED,
SINCE GOB HAS LONG FELT SENSE OF FRUSTRATION OVER INTRAN-
SIGENCE OF PF POSITION AND INABILITY OF PF TO COOPERATE
INTERNALLY.

2. MOGWE, AS EXPECTED, EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF AND
AGREEMENT WITH POINTS MADE BY CHARGE'. HE SHARES OUR CONCERN
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THAT SALISBURY TALKS MIGHT RESULT IN SOME FORM OF BOGUS
SOLUTION WHICH WILL NOT FIND INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE; WILL
LEAVE NATIONALIST FIGHTING FORCES ON OUTSIDE, FREE TO CONTINUE
THE WAR; AND WILL IN THE END BE WORSE THAN NO SOLUTION AT
ALL. THE ONLY WAY, MOGWE SAID, THAT HE COULD SEE ANY POSSIBILITY
OF SMITH'S SUCCEEDING IN HIS APPARENT ATTEMPT TO "MAKE THE PF
IRRELEVANT" WOULD BE IF SMITH'S MOST RECENT AMNESTY OFFER SHOULD

BE ACCEPTED BY LARGE NUMBERS OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS, THEREBY LEAVING NKOMO AND MUGABE WITH LITTLE OR NO MILITARY BASE. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS LATTER POSSIBILITY WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WERE RECEIVING NO INDUCEMENTS TO RETURN OTHER THAN THE SIMPLE OFFER OF AMNESTY (I.E., THERE WERE NO APPARENT PLANS TO OFFER THEM JOBS OR OTHERWISE INTEGRATE THEM BACK INTO THE FABRIC OF RHODESIAN SOCIETY).

3. MOGWE SAID THAT, AS WE KNEW, GOB'S POSITION ON RHODESIA HAS BEEN QUITE LOW PROFILE WITHIN PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. GOB HAS ACCEPTED ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AS BEST APPARENT BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION AND IS SUPPORTING THEM AS SUCH BUT IS NOT REALLY IN POSITION TO EXERT MUCH INFLUENCE ON NKOMO AND MUGABE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NYERERE AND MACHEL BOTH HAVE DONE GOOD WORK IN PUSHING PF TOWARD MALTA MEETING AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PF WOULD GO TO MALTA WITH DETERMINATION TO BE FLEXIBLE AND REASONABLE IN NEGOTIATIONS. MOGWE ALSO SAID HE HOPED PF MIGHT EVENTUALLY SEE IT POSSIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THOSE PARTIES NOW PARTICIPATING IN SALISBURY TALKS (INCIDENTALLY, HE CHARACTERIZED SALISBURY DISCUSSIONS AS EXACTLY WHAT WAS NEEDED "FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO", BEFORE THE FIGHTING REALLY STARTED; NOW THEY ARE IRRELEVANT, HE SAID). MOGWE ADMITTED THAT PF PARTICIPATION WITH SALISBURY PROTAGONISTS WOULD NECESSARILY BE CONTINGENT ON A NUMBER OF FACE-SAVINGS PRE-CONDITIONS (ON BOTH SIDES), BUT RATHER WISTFULLY HOPES
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THAT THESE MIGHT NOT BE SO UNREASONABLE OR INFLEXIBLE AS TO CAUSE THE EXPANDED NEGOTIATIONS TO DIE STILLBORN.

4. IN PASSING, MOGWE REFERRED TO THE "UNFORTUNATE ERROR" PRESIDENT KAUNDA HAD MADE IN MISREADING THE FEELINGS OF OTHER FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS AND PROPOSING HIS "INDEPENDENCE BAFORE ELECTIONS" POSITION. HE GUESSED KAUNDA HAD EXPECTED TO EMERGE "A HERO", HAVING CARRIED THE DAY WITH A BOLD STROKE; BUT NOW THAT ILL-CONCEIVED IDEA HAS APPARENTLY RETREATED INTO THE BACKGROUND, THERE HOPEFULLY TO REMAIN.

5. COMMENT: IN SUMMARY, WE HAVE A LOT OF GOODWILL FROM THE GOB (WHICH IS ANXIOUS TO SEE ANY SOLUTION EMERGE WHICH PROMISES PEACEFUL BORDERS), BUT WOULD BE MISLEADING OURSELVES TO EXPECT GOB TO BE OF MUCH SOLID ASSISTANCE IN PRESSURING NKOMO AND MUGABE. END COMMENT.

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